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Woodpecker wisdom
Naturally Yours on page 4

Scam alert
Beware of fake calls on page 5

Spring has sprung
A new season of light on page 6



Flowers, whether inside or out, add a splash of colour to this time of year.
/EMILY STONEHOUSE staff

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OSCAR: *Hilarious*

HELLO. I'M Oscar. That Grade 5 creep the other guys hate. Every girl too, except for Georgie. I've known her since daycare. We're neighbours, so that helps. She's in Grade 6, but we're not that far apart in months. I once noticed her starting a tree fort in the maples near their paddock. I invited myself over to help. Now we're best friends. She isn't one of the cooler kids. She doesn't even try.

Maybe I'll get to know more Grade Sixes. I haven't been in the same class with some of them. But they've all seen me make one of them cry. I laughed maybe a

bit too hard when *Mumble-Mouth-Martha* thought she was supposed to call the new teacher *Misty Fields*. I knew it was an accident, but I dissed old *Mumbles* anyway. My family's always reminding me to *read the room*. Find the *vibe* before jumping in. If I need to be loud or sarcastic, I should first check if it's the right time or place. I don't want to. Does that

make me a creep?

Georgie thinks I shouldn't have called *Mumbles* a *virus*. Nobody appreciated that. But saying sorry isn't the easiest. Sometimes I'm ashamed. My face burns, and I end up making more jokes or noises. Little kids like when I bounce around hilariously like a monkey.

Here's something good: I secretly draw animals on my desk. Spit and pencil work great together. I check every morning to see if my doodles are still there. The custodian doesn't always wipe tables. Drawing helps me listen. This new teacher hasn't noticed yet.

Another thing I do is slap red circles onto highway signs. My mission is to make all deer noses look like Rudolph. I position my bike to stand on, and climb the posts. I think it's hilarious. I sneak the stickers

from school.

What's not hilarious is that I also have a red nose. From wiping snot. My eyes drip too, like I'm crying. Allergies. Sometimes my crazy sneezing scares people. But I hide my puffer. I slam anyone who laughs. If somebody even *looks* at me, I stare them down with stink-eye or swear words.

Dad asked me the other day what I want to be *IF* I ever grow up. I said *a standup comedian*. I'm totally serious. I study jokes almost every night. Imagine all that fame and money!

I heard somebody ask Miss Fields if rumours were

true. Would there be a school Talent Show? She said she used to run them with help from students. Then I asked if I could do a comedy routine for my turn in spring to teach the class. She said she'd think about it. Then she started asking me to think about helping her plan a Talent Show. But I interrupted, and she jumped when I yelled:

OMG!! YOU FREAKIN' KIDDIN' ME, MISTY??
LET'S DO THIS!

At afternoon recess, I apologized to Martha for hurting her feelings the other day.



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Mobbed

THIS MORNING, at 8 a.m. while I was drinking my coffee and admiring our forested yard, a flock of 15 wild turkeys marched through the place like they pay the property taxes – which, I assure you, they do not. They do not even chip in.

To the untrained eye, it probably just seems normal. A person who knows nothing about wild turkeys might even assume they were foraging for food and trying to sort out which of the three gobblers was going to be the dominant one. But, as an experienced turkey hunter, I know better.

That was not a flock of turkeys. It was a mob.

As if to confirm, the head gobbler gave me the look that said, “Nice place you got here. It would be a shame if something happened to it ...”

It is this sort of behaviour that gives wild turkeys a bad name.

A lot of people would be intimidated by this, but not me. I absolutely refuse to give them protection money.

The bird seed in the feeder is for the chickadees. Honest.

Having said that, I know we have a problem.

And I said as much to Jenn.

“Those turkeys are shaking us down again,” I muttered.

I believe this is happening because

they think I am a pushover.

You see, we moved into our new house in spring last year, right on opening day of turkey season. Because of the hectic period after the move, I didn’t turkey hunt once.

I’m fairly sure they took that as a sign of weakness.

Heck, last spring, I couldn’t even look out the basement window without seeing a turkey looking back menacingly. For the first few times, I thought it was just my reflection in the window, but I learned otherwise after I realized the window was open.

Soon after they began routinely sending low-level birds to intimidate me.

I know what you are thinking. But you try asking our police service to charge a wild turkey with extortion.

This continued throughout the spring. They were never far off. There were several occasions when I took my bird dog in the yard for a run, and she flushed a couple hiding in the ferns.

There is nothing better for a bird dog’s ego. It’s even good for the ferns, since they normally don’t get that level of fertilization.

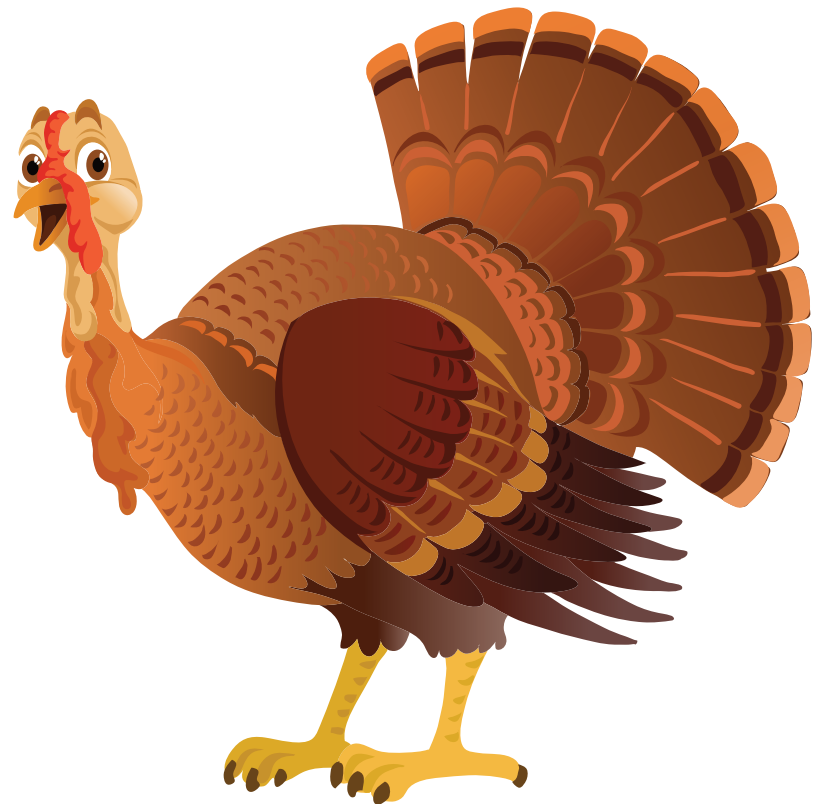
But I think I just made them mad.

The rest of the season, we frequently had a large group of large, demanding turkeys at our bird feeders. They’d hang out in the trees over it and look



STEVE GALEA

Beyond 35



in the windows, and if it weren’t filled promptly, leave a message on my car.

Jenn responded by keeping the bird feeder full. I might have helped.

This year should be different though. I just bought my wild turkey tag, and I have a couple of hunts already planned. That means I will leave this house before dawn on several occasions, and drive a half hour away, just so I can sneak into my turkey hunting grounds just before legal light and set

up.

Then, I will probably hear gobblers in the distance, and even see some out of range. And, after doing this for a few days, by using a tried-and-true tactic, I will finally coax one within gun range – and that bird will sound off and wake me up.

That’s when I’ll likely switch over to trout fishing.

Given the choice, I prefer to sleep with the fishes ...

In a crowded room, be a connector

IWENT to a large community meeting this week and as sometimes happens, I entered the crowded room of people and did not see a single person that I knew. I was standing still, scanning the room for some seconds when someone came up behind me. This person that I had not yet really seen said: “stick with me and we will find coffee.”

It was such a poignant gesture, it turns out that it was a colleague I knew. What I loved though was that he did not stop and say hello or try to make small talk and then move on to coffee or the rest of the room alone. Whether he realized my scanning or not, he just saw me there and invited me into his space, instantly making me feel centered and ready to launch into the crowded room and begin making connections.

We all have this power, not only to scan the crowded room for people we know, but also to make the room being scanned more welcoming. It makes

me reflect on the kind of inclusion we strive for, more than just a handshake or a wave. Inclusion means that someone noticed a person on the side and drew them in. That all people are moving around, belonging, contributing, able to connect as equals.

In the room on this day, I was inside the room, I was an invited guest and I knew that my role in this room was to listen and vote. One could argue that I was included, however, my colleague took it to the next level.

I was present, but now connected, welcomed and drawn into the room. And from that drawing in I could launch into connecting with

others, making introductions and seeking to understand and include others. When in a crowded room, be a connector, be a welcomer, and if we all take that step in to move beyond the greeting and invite participation, very soon we will all feel seen, included and like we are where we belong.



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Naturally Yours

Creature Feature — The Pileated Woodpecker

NOW HERE is a bird I can identify without binoculars – it is hard to confuse for anything else! About the size of a crow, the pileated woodpecker is a striking bird with a fiery red crest, vibrant white strips along its neck and a sleek, black body. In flight, white patches flash under their wings – very eye-catching. Residing all winter in our mature forests, ecologists refer to the pileated as a keystone species.

A keystone species is a relatively uncommon species whose life cycle and behaviour benefits a disproportionately long list of other species and plays a critical

roll in ecosystem function. Wolves are keystone species as are many other top predators around the world. The critical ecological role that the pileated woodpecker plays results

from drilling holes in trees – often large, deep holes – which provide opportunities for other species to forage, nest and shelter.

Old woodpecker nests or excavated cavities are quickly occupied by “secondary cavity nesters” or wildlife that rely on tree cavities but don’t have the capacity to make their own. These species include endangered bats, various duck species, many small owls, songbirds and mammals like flying and red squirrels, fisher and pine martens.

The pileated woodpecker is also an agent of change in our forests. Whacking at decaying logs and standing dead trees or snags, the holes they make open the tree up to quicker decay. Furthermore, their formidable beak carries with it various wood-decaying fungi. Moving that fungi around accelerates the decomposition process.

From a distance, pileated woodpeckers can be identified by the way they fly.



RICK WHITTEKER

Naturally Yours



Close up Pileated Woodpecker.
/Ed Poropat

The flight pattern is like a roller coaster; they flap their wings to rise and then glide and drop back down again. Very different from the steady wingbeat of crows, this undulating flight pattern distinguishes pileated woodpeckers for most other birds.

On guided hikes, I like to add a little levity to the discovery of the large, oval holes made by Canada’s largest woodpecker. I explain that woodpeckers don’t drill deep into trees only to exclaim, “bummer, there’s nothing here!” The significant effort needed to bore deep into a tree is not a random act – woodpeckers have acute hearing and will confirm the presence of insects before excavating.

Carpenter ants make up a large portion of the pileated woodpecker’s diet. These ants, unlike termites, do not eat wood but use trees and other wooden structures as nesting sites. If you see fine sawdust at the base of trees or inside tree cavities, this will confirm the presence of carpenter ants. These wood tailings are the byproduct of chewed out networks of tunnels and cavities called galleries. Pileated woodpeckers bore

into these galleries and used their sticky, barbed tongues to extract the ants.

If you see bark strewn about at the base of snags, this is commonly the result of pileated woodpeckers seeking beetle grubs and other insects hidden under the bark. They also eat wild berries and nuts and will visit backyards in search of suet in the winter.

The sounds that pileated woodpeckers make are unmistakable. Their calls sound quite primordial – one call is a loud, rising and falling cackle that could easily be mistaken for a tropical rainforest species instead of a common, year-round resident of our woodlots.

If you consider the blend of spring bird, frog and toad calls as nature’s symphony then woodpeckers would be the percussion section. Spring-time territorial drumming is an incredibly rapid hammering sound – up to twenty beats per second – used to attract a mate. Drumming is also a form of avian morse code spelling out clearly that, “this territory is taken!” to other competing woodpeckers. The louder the better; they drum on any available sound resonating object producing enough volume to be

heard up to a kilometer away!

Once a mate is found, they stay close for life. They work together to chisel out a nesting site in March or April, share the incubating duties and take turns on the nest watching over the noisy clutch of hatchlings.

Large, standing dead trees and fallen logs are things that some property owners and forest managers may consider undesirable. Sustainable forest management in Ontario requires retaining a minimum of six snags per hectare. For landowners with no tree harvesting intentions, the more snags on your property the better as they don’t impede regeneration, they offer a wealth of wildlife habitat and they transition to downed woody debris completing the forest nutrient cycle.

Easy to identify by sight or sound, pileated woodpeckers play a key role in forest ecology and are an important driver behind forest biodiversity in the Haliburton Highlands. So, if you hear a high-pitched cackle or loud drumming on your spring rambles, you know there is a VIP – a very important pileated – nearby.

Grandparent fraud targeting local residents

The City of Kawartha Lakes Ontario Provincial police are warning residents about recent incidents involving the Grandparent Scheme, a fraud targeting seniors and vulnerable community members.

In these cases, victims receive a phone call from someone claiming to be a grandchild or relative in urgent distress. The caller often says they have been arrested, injured, or stranded and urgently need money for bail, legal fees, or travel expenses. Victims are typically instructed not to tell anyone and are pressured to provide money immediately, often through cash pickup, courier, gift cards, or electronic transfer.

Police have received reports of this scam occurring locally, residents are urged to remain vigilant.

How to protect yourself and your loved ones

• Police are reminding the public to take the following precautions:

- Pause and verify - Hang up and contact the relative or another family member directly using a known phone number.
- Be suspicious of urgency - Fraudsters rely on fear and pressure to prevent victims from thinking clearly.
- Never send money or gift cards to someone you do not personally know or cannot independently verify.
- Do not share personal or financial information over the phone.
- Create a family code word that can be used to verify real emergencies.

What to do if you receive a call

- If you receive a call believed to be part of the Grandparent Scheme:
- Hang up immediately.
- Do not provide money or personal information.

- Report the incident to police, even if no money was lost.

Reporting Fraud

Anyone who believes they have been targeted or victimized by fraud is encouraged to:

Contact the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) at 1-888-310-1122

Report the incident to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at 1-888-495-8501 or online at www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca

Police continue to work with community partners to raise awareness and prevent further victimization. Residents are encouraged to share this information with family members, friends, and neighbours-particularly seniors.

Fraud prevention starts with awareness. When in doubt, hang up and check it out.

Submitted

Writing on the Senior Side

A whole new world of scammers

GAIL STELTER

County Life Contributor

"Hello, yes, this is M. Gail Stelter, and yes, that is my book."

The high-pitched accented voice is difficult to hear and to understand. She rambles on about an award and tells me her company will do ... I can't hear, and I am suspicious.

"Please put all you are trying to say to me in an email and send it to me. Please know that when you do, I will thoroughly check you out to make sure this is not a scam. I am sorry if I sound a little harsh, but I have been scammed before."

She is happy to accommodate my request, records my email address, and our phone call terminates. There is no email. Guess it was a scam.

Two days later: "Hello, yes, this is Gail Stelter, and yes, that is my book." The voice sounds familiar. "Did you call here a couple of days ago?"

She assures me that she did not. She tells me she is calling from the UK. It's around 7 p.m. here, so what time would it be in the UK? Midnight? Really, who are these scammers? I tell her the same spiel. Put it in an email, etc. There is no email.

Both of these came on the phone, our landline. Other attempted scams have entered our home this way: credit card scams, Revenue Canada, bank scams and more. We are done. Cancel the landline. There, that feels better.

Wait, perhaps I shouldn't feel better yet; there was more to come. Emails: For just \$3,500, Jeff will make me a best-selling author. It's just a one-time payment. Jeff's address is Fort Worth, Texas, so make that \$3,500 U.S. dollars. He could be legit or maybe not. I don't purchase anything from an unsolicited email. Delete. Mary tells me she has read my book and loves it. She even quotes and refers to my book, using only the words from the summary on the back cover, which have been included in descriptions on Indigo, Amazon, etc. Mary writes book reviews, and for a reasonable price, she will write a great review of my book. I laugh. I want to tell her that paying for a book review is unethical and not my style. I want to tell her I know she didn't read the book. I don't. Delete says it all. There are several emails similar to Mary's.

Next, it's my cell phone. Anna is also from the UK. Well, at least the time of day works. She has read my book and wants to arrange a podcast. I tell her that

sounds delightful and, by now you know my drill ... put it in an email, etc. She says she understands completely. The email arrives a few minutes later, complete with a detailed explanation and additional information, including links to the website and the podcast on YouTube. My son is visiting and takes it upon himself to check it out. It seems on the up and up. Anna includes a beautiful review of my book, one that obviously shows she has read it. I emailed Anna back expressing my interest. That was twelve days ago. No response from Anna. I am not sure what to think, but the word scam comes to mind. I hope I'm wrong, not just because of the review and the podcast, but because occasionally it would be nice to have my increasingly cynical and suspicious mind be wrong.

I decide to do a little reading/research. Among the articles I read is this excerpt from Australia in The Guardian:

Self-publish and be scammed: Jon's tale of heart-break. It highlights the boom in fraudsters using AI to supercharge book swindling. Eight years of dedication were poured into the pages of *Angel of Aleppo*, Jon Cocks' debut historical novel. Inspired by his wife's grandmother, a survivor of the Armenian genocide of the early 20th century, it was a labour of love, distilled from thousands of hours of research and oral testimony. The retired South Australian high school teacher's project carried the weight of family history and historical truth. It was precisely this emotional gravity that rendered him vulnerable. In six months, Cocks has lost almost \$10,000. It wasn't vacuous adulation that hooked him but the political and moral significance the solicitations attributed to his work. The pitches argued that his years of emotional investment deserved a global audience befitting a historically vital narrative; that an advanced marketing campaign would deliver his message to the world."

"And here's me stupid enough to think these people were for real," he says. "It still makes me angry – I rant for a bit, then I calm down again. I'm 70, I don't want to bring on an episode."

Jon's story is so upsetting. I hurt for Jon. I understand how easily you can be scammed. To have worked so long and hard on your labour of love, your book and then to be scammed. It's sad.

Oh, you may say, "I'm too smart for scammers, I won't fall for a scam," Then, if you do, you feel ashamed and believe it's your own fault, and I suppose, to some extent, it may be, and this is also sad. We must be armed and ready to meet the scammers

in their evil dens, but most people, especially seniors who have lived an honest and ethical life in a time when the people who entered their lives were of the same bent, can be taken in. It's not their fault; blame the scammer, not the victim. I understand the destruction of self-worth, the frustration and even devastation of lost money you can ill afford to lose. Scammers have become more sophisticated. Gone are scams that were easily identifiable by spelling errors, strange formatting, and impersonal salutations. With AI, scamming has exploded. It's easy to set up these websites. It's easy to create fake people. It's easy to create fake videos. It is certainly not just new authors who are the victims. All of us, my senior side friends, may have difficulty keeping up with all the scams interrupting our everyday lives.

According to the Government of Canada, the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC), "Canadians lost more than \$700 million to fraud through 112,000 instances reported in 2025. Only an estimated 10 to 15 per cent of fraud cases are reported. Many victims feel embarrassed or ashamed and never report what happened, which allows fraudsters to continue targeting others."

Here are the top five scams as listed by CAFC.

1. Investment fraud: This involves fraudulent investment opportunities and fake advisers promising high returns.

2. Relationship and romance fraud: Fraudsters build trust online and convince victims to send money. AI chatbots are now being trained on romance novels and the target's interest to create the perfect online partner who's available to woo victims 24-7

3. Identity fraud: Scammers often use stolen information from prior data breaches or leaks or infostealer infection of devices to open accounts or hack into existing ones.

4. Phishing. Fraudulent emails or text messages are designed to steal personal and financial information. Recent phishing email/SMS scams include fake speeding notifications, those about undelivered packages, and fake job offers, among others.

5. Recovery fraud: Recent reports indicate scammers are also reaching out to previous victims of fraud to offer help to recover lost funds.

Our task is to be prepared. Read/research and stay up to date with the new AI scams. We live in a scamming world, and while I am not fond of my increasing cynicism, I know it will serve me well.

And yet, I still hope to hear back from Anna.

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Classifieds, Amanda Gonyea Inside sales
Karen London, Production Co-ordinator
Stacey Potalivo, Production

146 Highland St., Box 360, Haliburton, Ontario K0M 1S0
 Phone: 705 457-1037

Website: www.haliburtonecho.ca
 Box 97, Minden K0M 2K0
 Phone: 705 286-1288
 Website: www.mindentimes.ca

Send your letters to the editor to
emily@haliburtonpress.com. Letters must be signed
 and include a phone number.

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Spring has sprung

THEY SAY money can't buy happiness,
 And in the case of spring, they're prob-
 ably right.

There are a select few feelings that cannot be
 captured in a singular word. It's not something we
 chase, not something we can
 buy.



EMILY STONEHOUSE
 County Life Editor

It's a feeling. A sprinkle
 of joy we wish we could
 capture in a bottle, but the
 fleeting abstraction of it all is
 what makes it desirable.

That first snowfall.

The sound of your child
 giggling.

The feeling of warmth
 when your hands wrap

around a favourite mug.

And of course, the first few rays of sunlight after
 a long, cold winter.

I am always surprised at how significant this
 feels.

Every year we go through it, and every year,

we rejoice.

While we know spring is inevitable, that early
 feeling is something that wakes us up each and
 every time. Our long dormant thoughts, feelings,
 priorities that have been sleeping in the depths of
 our psyches are suddenly rising to the surface once
 again; hope and vibrancy back on the forefront.

It's something that connects us to the faraway
 days of being animals; our souls and spirits tied to
 the land in ways we will never fully grasp.

And while we stretch our arms and embrace the
 season ahead, it's natural to feel the need for a
 fresh start.

Mine always comes in the form of rearrang-
 ing our home. Little adjustments and shuffles to
 add flow to a space that's held us in hibernation.
 Airing out our corners and wiping away the cob-
 webs.

The need to rewire and rearrange is something
 that is so common that psychologists have coined
 the term "the Fresh Start Effect" in reference to the
 notable jump in initiative that routinely crops up
 in springtime.

While winter holds the commonly practiced invi-
 tation to a new year (how many New Year's reso-
 lutions are still in place?), spring offers a physical
 awakening that is more aligned with the animalis-
 tic urge to begin again.

I've long said that winter is not the time for a
 new chapter to begin. Winter is a time for rest, for
 protection, for proper nourishment and dedicated
 mindfulness.

But spring is a fresh start. And while it may not
 always be fresh blooms and warm buds, even the
 Tim Hortons cups left in the ditch offer a reminder
 of something new.

So while we air out our corners and wipe away
 the cobwebs, let us extend our feeling for a fresh
 start beyond the four corners of comfort, and into
 the world. Community clean-ups, environmental
 initiatives, and yes, even an opportunity to run for
 local council, in an effort to implement change at a
 meaningful municipal level.

Fresh starts happen in the spring.

It's time to tap into that feeling of fleeting
 abstraction, and wake up.

Top 10 reasons insects scare people

I THINK we can all agree that insects are an inte-
 gral part of our eco-system and, for the most part,
 we appreciate their efforts. We can also admit
 that when they catch you unawares, they sometimes
 scare the bejeezus out of us. Call it over exuberance if
 you like, but we all know you
 screamed out of fear.



STEVE GALEA
 Humour Columnist

Here are the top 10 reasons
 you might have:

1. Though you can't hear it, they're always yelling "Boo!"
2. You never really know what they're going to say.
3. They have a lot of relatives at the hive.
4. It could be the stingers ...
5. Hollywood portrayals of them are never kind.
6. Some of them burrow into your skin, but they all pay the price.
7. Are you going to mess with a creature known for rolling around oversized balls of dung.
8. They generally outnumber you.
9. One day one of them will ask you to explain the fly swatter.
10. You worry they will look at the grill of your car and start a class-action lawsuit.

Returning

Vees of geese smearing the blank canvas of Sky, appearing as if out of nowhere,
 their honks piercing Air, blaring over the Lakes and Rivers they remember,
 returning each year to the place they know,
 carrying harbingers of spring on their wings, drowning the chirps of chickadees and the caws of crows
 that listen in the branches of trees, the mallards that float along rivulets of River, or rest on its banks,
 hearing the honking too,
 knowing they will have to make room for their arrival, as they share water and pieces of shore,
 Vee after Vee, unfurling like black ribbons up in Sky, as I pause in the middle of the road,
 craning my neck up to watch,
 the honks muzzling my thoughts, my eyes marveling at then flecks of black wings flapping though Air
 and the precision of their flight, grateful for their return from warmer climes,
 wondering whether their feathers feel the rawness of Air,
 as they wing their way back to where they belong, a pair of seagulls flying below them, sharing space and Air,
 their squawks muffled by hundreds of honks, as Vees of geese, large and small, ripple through Air,
 changing leaders at the tip of the Vee, stray geese straggling behind, here and there, flying solo or in pairs,
 before they join the end of the Vee, my feet remain rooted to the road, a stillness swathing me,
 as my eyes follow the flight path of the geese returning, nothing else seems to matter at this moment,
 only watching and listening along with the chickadees and crows and the robins that drink from puddles
 sprawling along the side of the road, spring, spreading its wings, as water burbles over rocks in streams
 and Rivers swell and frozen Lakes begin to creak and crack beneath the surface as Vees of geese fly over them,
 searching for a place to land, on the runway of River or piece of Lake seeping through the ice,
 sunlight dripping down from a mottled Sky, warming the wings of the geese as they flap their way back,
 birdsong serenading them from down below, even though they don't hear,
 the whoosh of Wind propelling their wings,
 as they fly over the smudge of afternoon Moon rising up in Sky,
 their honks blaring over the bare crowns of trees, waiting to bud,
 over Rivers rising with rushing water and Lakes that the geese remember and know, waiting for the thaw
 to melt the ice that seals them from Air and light and the feel of feathers stroking them,
 as the Vees of geese arrive,
 returning year after year, to the land that remembers them and welcomes them back, my eyes watching Sky,
 'till the last ink drop of wing disappears, and the honks are swallowed by Sky,
 but still I stand here, in the middle of the road,
 my ears listening to the chirps of chickadees and robins and the caws of crows, layers of birdsong piercing Air,
 wondering how the geese always know the right time for them to return,
 enduring Rain and cold during their long flight,
 as they wing their way back towards the land of forests and Rivers and Lakes,
 the lengthening days, bathing their feathers in the pureness of northern light.

Sylvie Kalenda

Chow Hound: A Poem about a Dog

Some people praise dogs
That have long pedigrees
Because they look picture perfect
Like they'll never have fleas

Others might laud
A particular canine
Because its nose and tail
Form a straight line

But, if the truth of the matter
Now may be told
The qualities of any dog
Can be extolled

And a finer four-legged friend
Could never be found
Than my trusty and
Faithful ...chow hound

His palate isn't
Particularly refined
On a bit of everything
He's probably dined

He samples this
And craves a bite of that
(The result is he's
Getting a little bit fat)

He isn't discerning
About what he devours
Cat food for him is
Delightful at all hours

(For purloining cat chow
He's developed a knack
And knows how to do it
Behind my back)

Sometimes he shocks me
When we're outside
And he digs up things
That might've once died

...Stuff that has
An awful smell
He finds it delectable
And rolls on it, as well

He's really delighted
By different flavours
Cantaloupe is something
He truly savours

Peanut butter on anything
Makes it taste just right
And greatly stimulates
His appetite

Olive oil adds
That special touch
(But sometimes I think
He insists on too much)

He can be a fussy
With his demands
And has me well trained
To his commands

I have to learn to be stern
Whenever I eat
Since he always assumes
That he'll get a treat

The food I'm having
Is what he wants to try
Or else he stares
With a mournful eye

And his nose slowly
Inches towards my plate
But, until I'm finished
He must try to wait

Or else it's one bite for me
One bite for him
...And dining that way
Might make me too slim

From coveting my food
Perhaps he'll never refrain
Unless, while I eat he's
Outside on the chain

Then, without interruption
I could have a meal
But sneaky and unsociable
Is how I'd feel

Knowing that he knew
That I dined alone
While he had to eat dog food
And chew on a bone

It's hard to be strict
Hence, I often give in
That's why he's getting chubby
And I'm getting thin

My dog is a companion
Of a most agreeable type
When I don't leave my food
Where it's easy to swipe

But if he snacks on something
He wasn't supposed to touch
I always forgive him
Because I love him so much

I'd now like to thank you
For taking the time
To read what
I've put into rhyme

Just a few more words
Ere I end this poem
May every animal shelter dog
Find a good home

~Kathy Figueroa

*Chow Hound: A Poem about a Dog
was first published on April 12,
2012,
in The Bancroft Times newspaper.*

Answer the call.

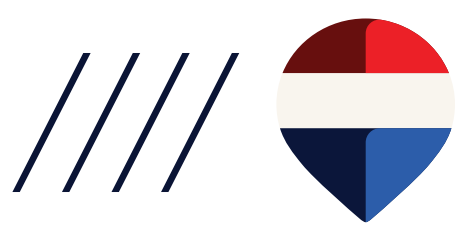
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Nature in your backyard

County Life welcomes photo submissions depicting life in the Highlands. Email emily@haliburtonpress.com. Please ensure images are high resolution - 200 dpi, 10 inches at its longest edge.



Dark Eyed Junco by Jill Moulton



Visiting Fisher by Tammy Nash



Eagles by Rob Barnes



Blue Jay at the feeder by Yale Brick

Legion Events

Branch 441 Kinmount

Monday: Bid Euchre 1 p.m., Card night 7 p.m.
Wednesday: Mixed Darts, 7:30 p.m.
Friday: Bingo- Doors open at 5 p.m., play at 6:45 p.m.
Saturday: Clubroom opens at 3 p.m. Meat draw 5 p.m.
Special events:
2nd Sunday of the month Ladies Auxiliary - 11 a.m.
3rd Thursday of the month 7 p.m. executive meeting and 7:30 p.m. general meeting (members only)
Last Sunday of the month - All you can eat breakfast
Hall rentals available at reasonable prices.
Email: 441RCL@gmail.com Call 705-488-3462 or 705-928-7105. We welcome everyone to our events and we look forward to seeing you!

Branch 129 Haliburton

Mondays: Bridge 1 p.m. Schofield Rm. Youth darts 6:30 to 8 p.m. Clubroom 10 to 18 years of age. All are welcome, no experience necessary
Tuesdays: League darts 7 p.m.
Wednesdays: Bid Euchre 1 p.m. start – Main Hall. Bingo doors open at 6 p.m. Bingo 7 p.m. FirstWed of each month with jackpot. Follow [Facebook.com/Branch129](https://www.facebook.com/Branch129) Bingo for the most up-to-date information
Thursdays: General Meeting third Thursday of the month, 6:30 p.m. All members urged to attend. Ladies Auxiliary last Thursday of the month at 1 p.m.
Fridays: Five meat draw, five prizes each draw, first draw 4:30 p.m., last draw 6:30 p.m. Tickets \$2 per draw. Paul Sisson, MC. Friday fun darts from 4:30 p.m. and onwards. 50/50 Draw 5:40 p.m.
Planning a function for 10 or 200, call Cheryl Waller at 905-447-7741, email haliburtonlegionrentals@gmail.com or visit haliburtonlegion.com. Everyone is welcome! Club room hours: Mon. 3 to 6 p.m., Tues. 3 to 9 p.m., Wed/Thurs. 3 to 6 p.m. Fri. 3 to 7 p.m.

Branch 636 Minden

Lunch - Monday to Friday
Monday: Rug Hookers every second week.

Bid Euchre 1 to 3 p.m.
Tuesday: Food 5 p.m. Canoe FM Bingo 6 p.m.
Thursday: Cribbage 1 to 3 p.m., Darts 7 to 9 p.m. and Euchre 7 to 9 p.m.
Every other Friday: Karaoke 8 to 11 p.m.
Friday Fish & Chips, Wings. Lunch 11a.m. to 2 p.m. and Dinner 4 to 7 p.m.
Saturday All Day Breakfast 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with three Meat draws at 11 a.m.
Call ahead any day for take-out: 705-286-4541.
Schedules are subject to change without notice.
Check our Facebook page Minden Legion Branch 636 for more info.

Branch 624 Wilberforce

Hours - Sunday: Special Events Only, Monday: 7 to 10 p.m., Tuesday: Special Events Only, Wednesday: 2 to 10 p.m., Thursday: 2 to 6 p.m., Friday: 2 to 11 p.m., Saturday: 2 to 7 p.m.
Sunday: April 12 L.A Breakfast \$10. 9-11am
Monday: April 6, 13, 20, 27 Darts \$5/player 7pm
Tuesday: April 14, 21, 28 Veteran's and Seniors Exercise Club 1 p.m.
Wednesday: April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 Darts \$5/player 2 p.m.
1, 15, 22, 29 Quick Supper Menu changes weekly \$10. 5 to 6:30 p.m.
1, 8, 15, 22, 29 Open Cribbage 6:30 p.m – No need to pre-register
Thursday: April 9, 23 HHHS Social Rec 10am
Friday: April 3, 17 Fish and Chips 1pc/\$15, 2pc/\$20. 5 to 8 p.m.
10, 24 Wings and Jam Session \$15/lb. 5 to 8 p.m.
10, 24 Community Care 55+ Lunch \$20. Noon
Saturday: April 18 Karaoke 8 p.m. to 1 a.m.
25 Nacho Average Trivia Registration is at 6:30 p.m. Game Begins at 7 p.m. Sharp. \$5/Player
Call the Legion for more info 705-448-222

SUMMER GUIDE MAGAZINE IS COMING SOON!

To see your not-for-profit or community event listed at no charge in our Summer Guide Magazine, send an email to HaliburtonSummerGuide@gmail.com no later than Wednesday May 6



Snowflake Meadows seeks support for kennel

THOMAS SMITH

County Life Staff

Animals provide unconditional love to those that choose to bring them into our homes. Sure, we provide them with a warm place to live, but there is no better feeling than having your pet choose you.

For Kristyn Begbie, she is pursuing her childhood dream of caring for animals that love her unconditionally.

Founded in 2018, Snowflake Meadows has grown amidst increasing demand. Waking up at 5 a.m. every day and going to bed at 11 p.m., Begbie realized that she needed help with an overwhelming number of surrenders, rescues, and dogs that need fostering.

Now, she has four core volunteers that she relies on, including Shanna Dryburgh who vets potential adoptees. She is in charge of conducting interviews and ensuring that their personalities and lives will blend well with an animal in their lives. She also contacts a vet reference to ensure that the animal will have veterinary care in the future.

Brenda Larson is currently in charge of their foster program connection with potential fosters, checking in on their progress, and keeping up with vet appointments.

Cathy Chumbley has graciously donated her time to Snowflake Meadows to take care of their accounting needs and monitor their expenses.

And Peggy Miller assists Begbie on Snowflake Meadows property, visiting three times per week to help the operation run smoothly.

"They volunteer their blood, sweat, and tears," said Begbie. "It has allowed our rescue to rescue more."

The founder says that Snowflake Meadows has res-



Snowflake Meadows is currently raising funds to build a kennel space on their rescue's property. With over 50 dogs at their max capacity, the demand for the rescue is quickly exceeding their capacity. Through fundraising efforts, direct e-transfers, and community support, they hope to meet their goal this year. /THOMAS SMITH staff

cued "a little bit of everything" including a tortoise, fish, parrots, birds, chickens, horses, sheep, goats, and even a peacock.

Last November, Mortimer, the eight year old Sulcata tortoise captured the hearts of many through Snowflake Meadow's social media.

At 42 pounds, the desert dwelling tortoise outgrew

his original owner's capacity. Destined to grow to a whopping 200 pounds, Mortimer now causes mischief at the rescue located on Ritchie Falls Road. With his own space to roam upstairs, the Snowflake Meadows team is currently retrofitting an ice hut into a year-

see page 13

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from page 12

round home for the tortoise, including his own pasture to roam outside in warmer weather.

A lover of pumpkin, squash, and lettuce, Begbie says that she is currently trying to figure out a tortoise diaper to make his roaming a little bit tidier.

Fans of Mortimer can expect him to make an appearance on June 6 at Snowflake Meadows' Magical Festival Fundraiser.

With the dogs that are rescued through Snowflake Meadows, around \$5,000 per month is spent on veterinary care in the form of vaccines and parasite prevention. For each dog that needs a spay or neuter, the procedure costs upwards of \$3,000.

Luckily, their dog food is supported through the Kibble Project. Begbie estimates that the rescue spends \$110 on dog food for 60 days of feed.

All of the money that Snowflake Meadows receives is through donation drives, community support, and the nail trims and microchipping events that Begbie offers. The fees from every adoption go towards covering a portion of the costs of care, feeding, and support.

Begbie says that some people choose to donate to the animal rescue through their estate in honour of their past loved animals. This is an incredible honour for their team, and is always both moving and emotional for them knowing that they thought of the care of animals in their own honour.

Living in Haliburton County is already expensive to afford. With caring for an animal, housing, grocery prices, and unstable housing are all some factors that make caring for a dog difficult for some.

"Dogs need somewhere to go when there is nowhere else," said Begbie.

Begbie is striving to break the belief that if you cannot afford care for your dog, you should just let them loose into the wild. Snowflake Meadows is willing to work with owners to support them in getting the care the animal needs, providing temporary shelter in an emergency, and letting pets continue to live with the owners they love.

During moments of peaks, Begbie says that she had 54 dogs at one time on her property. While she has a barn and her own home with young children, Begbie is currently raising funds for a new kennel building. The kennel will provide 10 kennel spaces for dogs to quar-

antine. In this space, Begbie and volunteers will care for the dogs and observe their temperament before introducing them to both dogs and people.

Two of the rooms in the kennel will be bigger with the intention for them to be used as sound-proof birthing areas.

Snowflake Meadows is setting their sights on raising \$17,500 to cover the costs of the build.

Begbie wishes that there were more people around the world that share her drive to rescue animals. Even in a low population region like Haliburton, she has a huge demand for rescuing animals.

You can directly support the animal rescue by e-transfer at snowflakemeadows@gmail.com. Currently, they have a Guess the Mutt contest, with a \$10 donation you can visit their social media page to guess the breed of Nala. Half of the proceeds will go to the grand winner and half will go to the rescue. They will also accept gift cards to any of the local pet stores and Minden Mercantile to help keep up with repairs.

"I have always wanted to rescue animals since I was two years old," said Begbie. "This is a lifelong dream for me. Knowing that I am a dog's second chance makes me feel like a good human being."

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Community Events

Send your event listing to classifieds@haliburtonpress.com

The Science of Happiness

When: Monday, April 13 from 7 to 9 p.m.
Where: Schofield Room, Haliburton Legion, 719 Mountain St, Haliburton
An evening that begins with live music from musician Jeff Moulton. Followed by a presentation and discussion with Peter Smith on the Science of Happiness, and how we can develop habits of happiness to build vibrant communities. Peter has had careers in Education and Change Management following studies in business, education, learning styles and brain-based

research. Hosted by the Baha'i community of Haliburton, with the goal of "Making Our Communities Better Places." Open to all, with no admission charge and light refreshments provided. For more info call Pat at 416-606-9657.

Come Together: A Fundraising Concert/Dance for Point in Time

When: April 17, 7 p.m., doors open at 6:30 p.m.
Where: Highland Hills United Church, 21 Newcastle St., Minden

Music provided by Adverse Conditions. Tickets are \$25 in advance, or \$30 at the door. Tickets available on www.eventbrite.ca, at Point in Time in Haliburton, or by calling 705-286-1470. Refreshments by donation at intermission.

Friends of The Haliburton County Public Library Café

When: Mon., April 27 1 p.m.
Where: Minden Hills Branch of The Haliburton Public Library, 176 Bobcaygeon Rd. Minden

The Friends of the Haliburton County Public Library are excited to host Fay Martin at our spring café. Fay is the author of "Dementia Widow". Join us for an informative afternoon to learn more about her recent book. Signed copies of Fay's book will be available for \$25. Light refreshments will be served. Admission is by donation. Have a question, contact Penni Chalk 705-286-3276.

Recurring events

TOPS: Take Off Pounds Sensibly

When: Monday mornings 9:30 to 11 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion Branch 129, upper level
Admission: Yearly membership of \$59
A non-profit/commercial network of weight-loss support groups, offers programs for healthy living and weight management.

Bridge for Seniors

When: Mondays at 1 p.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Schofield Room
All welcome
Haliburton Legion Walking Group
When: Mondays at 9 to 10 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
A safe walking environment. Lead by an Occupational therapist.

Free Balanced Fitness, Active Social Senior Classes

When: Every second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 10 to 11 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
All seniors are welcome. Group led by Registered Recreation Therapist
Bid Euchre
When: Wednesdays at 1 p.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
All welcome!

Duplicate Bridge - Please arrange for a partner.

When: Wednesdays at 12:45 at Park Lane Apartments.
Fridays at 12:45 at Haliburton Legion, Schofield Room.

Cards/Euchre/Cribbage

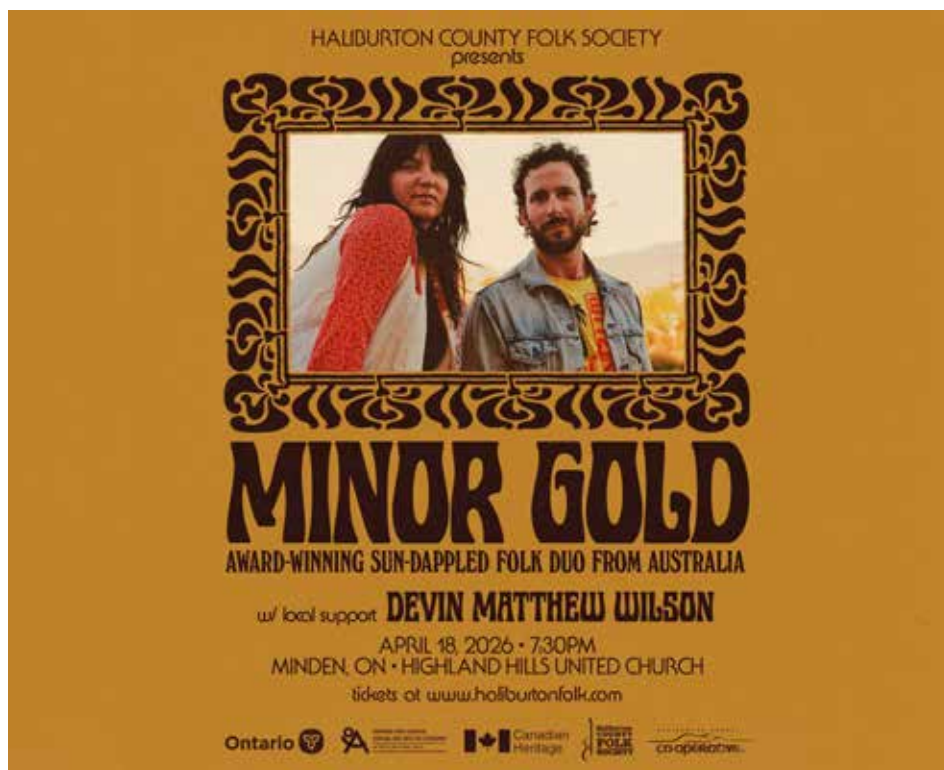
When: Thursdays at 2:30 p.m.
Where: St. George's Church
617 Mountain Street

Monthly Community Breakfast

When: Fourth Saturday of Every Month from 9 to 11 a.m.
Where: Fellowship Room, Haliburton United Church, 10 George St. Haliburton
Hosted by North Entrance Masonic Lodge and Haliburton United Church. No fixed cost for attending the breakfast. Donations are warmly welcomed and will be put to meaningful use supporting local initiatives. A portion of the proceeds collected will be donated to the Public School Breakfast Program in Haliburton County, helping to ensure that local students start their day with a nutritious meal.

Lakeside Church Service

When: Sunday at 9 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.
Where: 9 Park Street, Haliburton.
All welcome here.



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Contract deadlock

■ *Board of education calls for outside help to solve contract dispute with high school teachers*

by PETER DOWNS
Staff Reporter

Haliburton's school board has called in an outside advisor in a bid to settle an impasse in the contract dispute with its high school teachers.

The 47 teachers at Haliburton Highlands Secondary School, who have been working without a contract since the beginning of September, will be in a legal position to strike on April 17.

As of the same date, the board will have the power to lock the teachers out of the school.

The "key stumbling block" that has brought negotiations to a deadlock is the board's demand that the teachers take a one-year, 2.2 per cent wage roll-back, according to the Barrie lawyer who was appointed to try to bring the sides back together.

In a county where the teachers' unions — both elementary and secondary — have never taken to the picket line, this appears to be the board's most serious contract dispute yet.

However, negotiating teams for both sides were back at the bargaining table Thursday night trying to work out an agreement

for the first time since contract talks ground to a halt in February.

At that time, the board declared an impasse, 10 months after the two sides first met to discuss a contract for the 1996-1997 school year.

The Education Relations Commission appointed lawyer Calum MacLeod as a neutral third party to act as a "fact finder" to examine the causes of the deadlock and recommend possible solutions.

MacLeod met with the two sides on March 5 to discuss their dispute and submitted a 30-page report on his findings about two weeks later.

Only after the board and the teachers' union remained at odds was MacLeod's report made public on Wednesday and sent to all media outlets in the area.

"The release of a fact finding report marks a turning point in negotiations because it opens the door to sanctions," MacLeod writes in the report.

Teachers gain the right to strike 15 days after its release date and the board gains the

See FACT-FINDER page 6



Spring's Sweet Return

Kevin Burke pours some of the sap he and Keith Schrader have collected into a large vat which is pulled by horses to the Wruths' sugar shack in Lochlin. For more photos, see page 25.



Registry Office to stay put

by MARTHA PERKINS
Editor

The Minden OPP might be moving, but the Registry Office in Minden is staying put.

"As far as we're concerned it's not moving, and that's pretty solid and current," says Bud Schaab of the Ontario Realty Corporation in Orillia.

Schaab said they did consider other possible locations, but there was no available government-owned space which was large enough for the Office's needs.

"They are installing a new computer system that will even-

tually allow them to reduce their space requirements, but that's three years down the road."

Last year, the ORC introduced a policy which intended to minimize the province's leasing and renting costs. If a provincially-funded agency — such as the Minden OPP — did not own their buildings, there was a push to move them into the surplus buildings which were owned by the province. Hence the recent decision to move the Minden OPP office across the highway to the Ministry of Natural Resources office, which has surplus space after last year's layoffs. The OPP building was leased; the MNR's building was owned.

The Registry Office takes up an entire floor of a county-owned building on Newcastle Street.

Spring's back — and so is the "When will the ice melt on Head Lake" contest

Despite this week's weather, the consensus around the *Echo* office is that spring is truly on its way. And spring means the ice will melt on Head Lake.

Once again, the *Echo* is celebrating spring by holding the "When Will the Ice Melt on Head Lake" contest. From now until April 18, people are invited to guess when the last ice cube will be gone. Once again, Harold Bannon has agreed to become our ice watcher, a task he has performed with meticulous care.

The winner of the contest will receive a year's subscription to

the *Echo* and a copy of another celebration of the rites of spring — Margaret Carney's new children's book, *At Grandpa's Sugar Bush*, which describes spring at the Barry farm in Lutterworth. The book has been donated by the publishers, Kids Can Press.

To submit your guess, you can either drop by our new office overlooking Head Lake (the former Jackson Real Estate) as of April 10, phone us at 457-1037, fax us at 457-3275 or e-mail us at echo@halhinet.on.ca.

Don't forget — you have to make your guess by April 18 at 5 p.m. And please include a

time, too. Happy spring!



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